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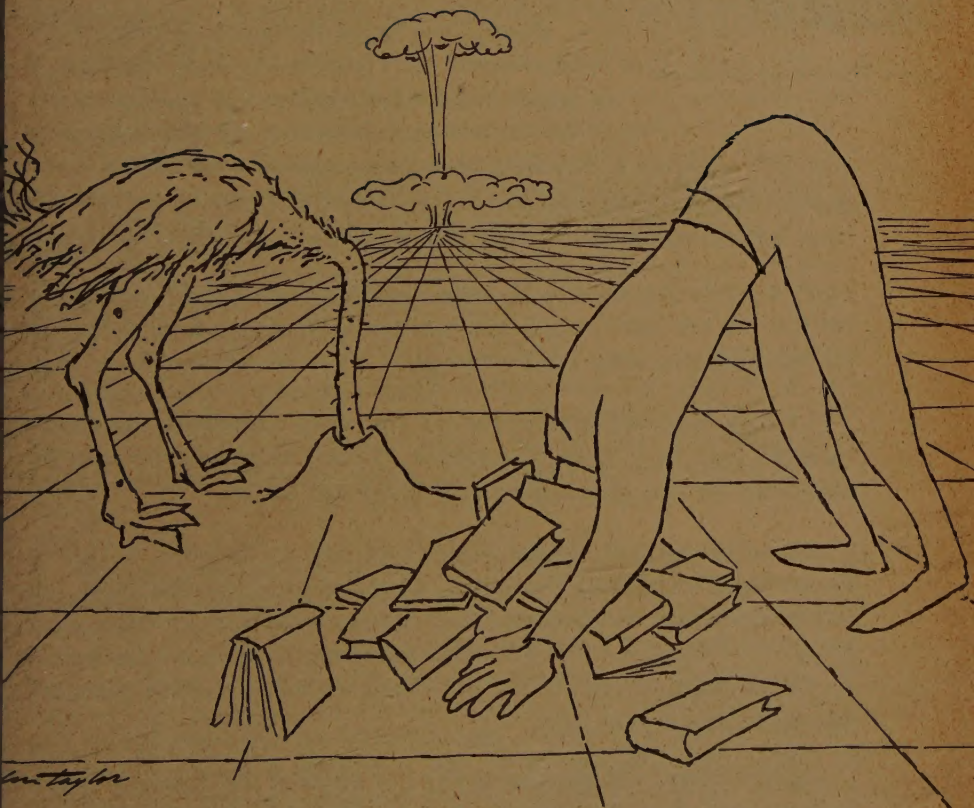
# FEDERATION

## NEWS SHEET

VOL. <sup>15</sup>~~XIV~~

November-December 1955

No. 6



*We Christian students are above politics*

A magazine published every two months by the

**WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION**

13, rue Calvin, Geneva



*Kyaw Than leaving Mandalay*

## STAFF NEWS

*Valdo Galland* visited Argentina and Chile in October and November. After some time of work at home in Uruguay, he will leave in early December for Bolivia to make final preparations for the South American Leadership Training Course, which will be held in Cochabamba December 28 to January 12.

*Kyaw Than* visited Malaya in October, where he met with T. V. Philip and Keith Bridston in preparation for the conference of theological students of Southeast Asia which will meet in Bangkok February 21 to March 6. Following this he made an extensive visit to the S.C.M.s in Japan and Korea. He plans also to visit Tai-wan (Formosa for the old-fashioned !) where he will chair a small consultation of S.C.M. leaders in East Asia.

*T. V. Philip* has spent two months visiting Indonesia and two weeks in Malaya. He will go in the near future to Hong Kong for a fortnight and to the Philippine Islands for at least a month.

*Ed Dirks* has been working for the University Commission by correspondence from New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., while giving most of his time to his teaching responsibility at Yale Divinity School.

*Alice Otterness* and *Philippe Maury* have been in the office in Geneva for most of October and November. At the end of November Alice will make her first visit to a national Movement as a Federation Secretary when she goes to Germany, where she will remain until the middle of December. At the beginning of January she will attend the meeting of the European Council at Bièvres near Paris.

*Philippe Maury* will leave for the United States at the beginning of December, where he will attend the Quadrennial Conference of the Student Volunteer Movement between Christmas and the New Year, and then go to Bolivia to take part in the Leadership Training Course for South American S.C.M.s. On his return trip he will visit Puerto Rico.



## NEWS LETTER

Dear readers :

We have tried to collect in this issue of the *Federation News Sheet* some brief statements on the responsibility of Student Christian Movements in the political sphere and on the way in which they are trying to fulfil it. Similar descriptions could be given of almost every S.C.M. in the world. If we were to compare S.C.M. life as it is today with what it was at the end of the last century, we would certainly recognize that one of the most significant changes has been the awakening of Christian students to their political responsibility. This has been the result of the wars and revolutions which have stricken our world during the last decades and which have compelled us to see that politics is, literally, a question of life or death—for the individual, for the nation, and, from the human viewpoint, for the Church.

But this political awakening has also been the result of something much more fundamental and of continuing relevance : the rediscovery, in the school of the Bible, that politics is a God-given responsibility, a field of Christian obedience. For a long time Christians went on the unchallenged assumption that politics was the realm of evil and therefore forbidden to anyone who wished to preserve real Christian integrity. It was recognized that some political order had to be maintained—no-one questioned that God had instituted the power of the sword, of the state—but this implied a completely negative approach to politics. The only justification for political institutions was held to be the maintenance of the police and army and the administration of justice in a purely punitive sense. All these things are, of course, necessary, and Paul wrote chapter 13 of his letter to the Romans. But it often seemed, some student generations ago, that there was no other biblical teaching concerning politics, and that there was no Christian responsibility in the political sphere other than passive obedience to the powers that be.

The coincidence in time of the great biblical renewal and of the growth of totalitarian regimes led to what I would call a political awakening among Christians. Theologians pointed to the immense variety of biblical teaching in this field; regular and systematic Bible study led S.C.M. members to find personal guidance, not only for their so-called spiritual and moral life, but also for their participation in the life of society, for their political service; and, at the same time, the church struggle developing in various countries, the threat or reality of persecution, and the growing complexity of political life, with the continually increasing responsibility of the state for all aspects of human life, brought home to us the irrelevance of the passive and negative approach to politics I described above.

More and more Christians, and particularly S.C.M. members, have come to regard political institutions as instruments through which God wishes us

to serve our neighbour and to establish or preserve in the world an order of justice, freedom and peace, in which Christians will have the physical possibility of living the Christian life and the Church of preaching the Gospel. The day is largely gone when for many Christians the idea of entering into the political arena was unthinkable; on the contrary, a growing number of Christians look at political jobs as real Christian ministries.

If we have thus achieved in the Federation a much larger degree of agreement about the way in which, as Christians, we must approach politics, this does not mean that political problems are not in many ways points of disagreement among our members and could even become points of division. At a time when political powers coincide with great ideological groups, it is extremely difficult for all men, and also for Christians, not to get involved in conflicts which tend to become crusades and which identify one side with evil and one with good. We can be grateful, perhaps more than for anything else, that our unity in the Federation has remained unchanged during the last two decades, in a time of division within the world, within each nation, almost within each family. We must be grateful, but we must also be vigilant lest we fall into the pit which is always yawning at our feet: that of identifying our own political convictions with the truth of Christ and identifying with the Church those Christians with whom we agree politically. This danger has appeared so serious to some Christians that they have even put a question mark against the very idea of Christian pronouncements about politics. Without denying the importance of political affairs in the plan of God, they have come to feel that our political choice is no longer one between greater and lesser evil, but rather a choice between two evils so terrible that it is impossible for the Church not to speak out equally against both, and therefore to take in the political sphere an attitude of pure judgment and rejection. Such an attitude, of course, implies that the Church must pay the price of refusal, of judgment, must be ready to suffer persecution from all sides. It may indicate excessive pessimism, but it is probably also indicative of real lucidity about the seriousness of the present situation. I personally think that there is still room for the Church, for Christians, to say and to do many things in the political sphere. But it seems to me urgent for all S.C.M.s to consider carefully what they are doing in this field and to guard against both dangers — that of the crusade and that of washing our hands of politics because we find no way of Christian obedience in it. It seems to me that an attitude of condemnation of all political forces is legitimate for Christians in our day only if they are ready to bear the burden of reprisals and perhaps to go into the catacombs.

With my best greetings,

Yours sincerely,

PHILIPPE MAURY



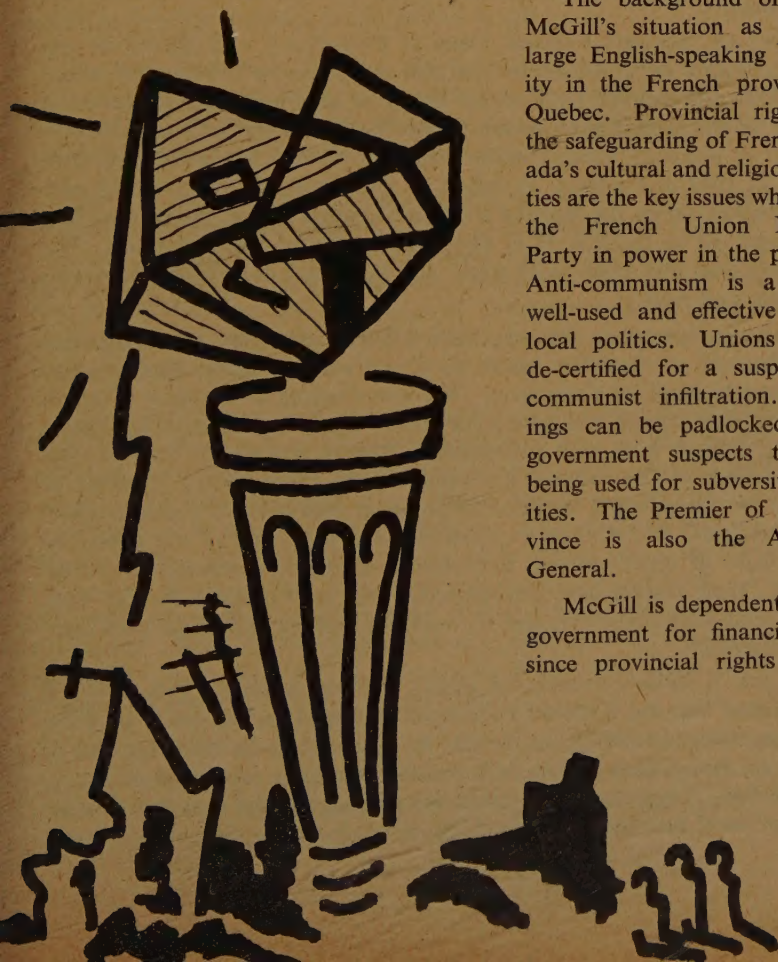
# S.C.M. POLITICAL ACTION AT MCGILL

SHEILA McDONOUGH

McGill S.C.M. has long known the joys and sorrows of notoriety. For years new members have had to learn that S.C.M. membership carried with it the stigma of the label "Student Communist Movement", and that their mildest activities were liable to wild misrepresentation. Even at National Council, or travelling in Europe, we have usually found that our name was known and that noise and vitality were expected of us. Though much of the notoriety has been undeserved, it has served to unite us in a feeling of shared adventure and willingness to be maligned, and has bred in us a strong distrust of propaganda and unreason.

The background of this is McGill's situation as the one large English-speaking university in the French province of Quebec. Provincial rights and the safeguarding of French Canada's cultural and religious liberties are the key issues which keep the French Union National Party in power in the province. Anti-communism is a further well-used and effective tool in local politics. Unions can be de-certified for a suspicion of communist infiltration. Buildings can be padlocked if the government suspects they are being used for subversive activities. The Premier of the province is also the Attorney-General.

McGill is dependent on this government for financial help, since provincial rights include



jurisdiction over federal aids to education. Official student organizations, such as the newspaper and the student council, are generally a-political. Many McGill students are wealthier than is usual in Canada, and residence fees are relatively high. There are a large number of American students. Men's and women's fraternities are the centres of the social life of the wealthier students.

In this situation the S.C.M. has been famous as an organization that has continually talked of action and reform. Over the years the pattern of McGill student life has included the fact that the S.C.M. house would serve as a meeting-ground where all views could be heard on any issue. Such topics as an exchange of Canadian and Russian students, the right of Christian ministers to work with communists, the freedom of atheists to broadcast on the C.B.C., the big strikes in Quebec mining industries, and unemployment are representative examples of the issues that have been debated in the house.

In 1947 Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, was offered the use of the house after the university refused him permission to speak in the union. The S.C.M. was jammed with people trying to hear him, and someone cut the wires of the loudspeaker system. Also in 1947, some S.C.M. members took part in picketing against sending arms to China. Some of them were involved in 1949 in a parade on behalf of the peace movement, which was forcibly broken up by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Some members were questioned by the R.C.M.P. about the loyalty of other members. The atmosphere then was much more tense, and the group more ready for action, than is the case now.

At this same period in the '40s, McGill S.C.M. students helped organize Beaver Brigades of Canadian youth to attend conferences in Hungary and Poland and to work in Yugoslavia. The coordinating committees of youth groups that they worked with have since broken up, owing to the unwillingness of some groups to work with communists. McGill was one of the two local units in favour of the national Canadian S.C.M. remaining a member of the communist-dominated World Federation of Democratic Youth in 1950. Every year from 1952-55 McGill students have been part of the Canadian S.C.M. team of observers sent to meetings of the International Union of Students. Their reports have recommended that the Canadian S.C.M. continue to send such observers, and to work for student exchanges with communist countries.

1953 saw a sudden flare-up of public opinion against the S.C.M. It recommended that the National Federation of Canadian University Students accept associate membership in the I.U.S. This action caused a ferment of rumours on the campus and in N.F.C.U.S. about the menace of the communist S.C.M. Like other crises, this one passed, and the next year McGill pulled out of N.F.C.U.S. entirely.



The notoriety has cost us much support and frightened away potential members, but it has also won us respect, particularly from non-Christian students who are disturbed by social injustice and the prevailing cynicism of the student body. Each new student cabinet has had to debate again whether to risk unpopularity. This continual need for decision has kept alive both the spirit and the notoriety. It has generally been decided that the S.C.M. should not act as a corporate body except to serve as a centre for discussion. Further actions, such as helping strikes or taking part in peace festivals, have been left to the discretion of individual members.

The records of the Movement since 1946 show the continual existence of study groups on topics like: A Comparative Study of Christianity and Communism, Recent Social Movements in Europe, Christianity and Social Action, Responsible Society, and International Affairs. Spring camp topics have kept up the tradition. It was Christianity in a World of Fear in 1949, and The Biblical Basis for Social Action in 1955.

No one theological position has dominated McGill, although student leadership has moved from Anglo-Catholics to United Church people. An ecumenical awareness is the outstanding characteristic of the group, whose active members have represented all the major churches.

Most of us have become some variety of socialist by the time we left McGill. An important political activity is the discussion with new students and the breaking down of the a-political and conservative attitudes which they usually bring from high school. One of the first talks I heard in the S.C.M. in 1950 was on the value of criticism. Such belief in a ruthless examination of all presuppositions has been the source of much of our creativity and enthusiasm.

The last two presidents' reports have both expressed dissatisfaction with what one of them termed "the anomalous position of criticizing the evils of the ivory tower while using its advantages to the fullest". In 1955 the president reported: "I feel that there is something deeply wrong with our S.C.M. It is like what is wrong with the university, what is wrong with the Church, what is wrong with our society. One of its symptoms is the sundering of one person from another into more and more compartments. Another is this gap between theory and practice. I wish I knew what it is, or who can tell us, but I don't. . . I do know that we cannot afford to continue to isolate ourselves, either as an S.C.M. or as individuals. The times are crying for a new birth into the love that is in Christ."

The acuteness of this feeling of inadequacy in the areas of social and political action is new to the Movement, but Guy's protest against the wrongness of things is a moving restatement of the awareness that has been central to the thought and action of the group for the past decade.



*Newly enfranchised women of Indonesia stand in line with their babies and parasols in a rural village near Djakarta, waiting to cast their ballots in the recent election*



# STUDENTS IN POLITICS

ODEH SUARDI

The Perserikatan Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia (National Union of Indonesian Students), usually called P.P.M.I., is "non-political". This does not mean that it puts aside every problem concerning the political life of our country — not at all! In fact, the "non-political" P.P.M.I. has itself a "political" character. It was born in the first student congress, held in Malang in 1947, as a federation of several student organizations, to coordinate activities on the national level for the defence and maintenance of independence, and on the international level to win moral support for this struggle.

The chief activities of the P.P.M.I. are the struggle to get better educational facilities, more scholarships, and a better law concerning higher education; assisting the government in general development projects; voicing its opinion in matters of national concern, and striving for better relationships with the students of the world.

It is not too unusual for the P.P.M.I. to be invited by the President during government crises to express the students' opinion on the composition of a new government or on important actions to be taken, or to be invited by the Educational Committee of Parliament to express its opinion on the educational program.

The P.P.M.I. became a member of the International Union of Students in 1947. Membership in such an organization was considered necessary to publicize the struggle for independence and to secure moral support for it. However, the P.P.M.I. Congress decided, in April, 1954, to withdraw its membership from the I.U.S. This does not mean that the P.P.M.I. will take an attitude of "splendid isolation"; it still wants to cooperate with I.U.S. in the field of practical student activities, sport, culture, exchange, etc.

Nearly all Indonesian students work while studying. This is not only because they have to earn their own living, but also because, due to the great shortage of educated people, their knowledge, limited as it is, is required in schools, offices, and in the armed services.

Though the Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (G.M.K.I. — Indonesian S.C.M.) is not a political organization, it is strongly influenced by the conditions, the atmosphere and demands of its environment. Christians

form a small minority in Indonesia, and most people still look upon Christianity as something Western. This misunderstanding can only be cleared up by showing them that the Indonesian Christians are also Indonesian people, with the same national language and country, who are taking an active part in helping to solve the national problems of our young country. As a member of the P.P.M.I., the G.M.K.I. hopes to be able to make some contribution to the student world in particular, and to the nation in general.

At the meeting of the Steering Committee of the P.P.M.I., held in February, 1955, there was a big discussion about the participation of the P.P.M.I. in celebrating February 21 as Anti-Colonial Day. There were many organization members who did not agree to celebrate this on February 21, but some, including G.M.K.I., stressed the content, the essence of the celebration. The day itself is not of primary importance: the significant thing is the condemnation of every system of colonialism wherever it exists.

In the discussions in parliament on the university law, nearly all student organizations have expressed their opinions, which in general favour efforts to democratize university education.<sup>1</sup> The students have also organized demonstrations demanding the reduction of the prices of text books, and the government has taken steps to reduce them by fifty per cent.

The students are taking part in the anti-illiteracy campaign, have actively shared in helping the victims of the explosion of the Merapi volcano and the fires in Djakarta, and have helped in the preparations for the general election. Before the general election many individual members of the G.M.K.I. in Djakarta helped in arranging a bazaar and performing a play with a biblical theme ("Gideon") to raise money for the Parkindo (Indonesian Christian Political Party). They also went from house to house, where Christian families live, to give clear information about the election, and to make sure the people had been registered by the "Lurah" (the head of the village), so they would be able to vote in the election as citizens. It was hoped that all Christians would vote for the Parkindo, but it was up to them to decide, and the G.M.K.I. had no right to compel them in their decision. Of course, the G.M.K.I. would never consider itself as an "agent" of the Parkindo, because it does not aim to be a political organization. The very centre of its task is to bring the Gospel to all students, and to help strengthen our Christian brothers in their belief in Jesus Christ, the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Some background material: Bulletin PPMI 1954, *Basic information on higher education and related questions in Indonesia.*



# THE A.S.C.M. SPEAKS ON

Defence

Economic Planning

Immigration

IAN GILLMAN

In a country such as Australia, situated as it is with respect to Asia in its present stage of development, questions of national policy in the fields of defence, economic planning and immigration are always sure to arouse student interest. Indeed, in Australia's case the three fields interlock, largely because of our geographical position. This is a factor of which we cannot but be acutely aware as we move around our universities side by side with a substantial number of Asian students. It is not surprising, then, that within the last two years the A.S.C.M., true to its traditions, has raised its voice, and not without effect, on all three questions.

For some four or five years all Australian youths, as they have reached eighteen years of age, have been called upon to complete National Service Training in one of the three armed services. An attempt was made to interfere as little as possible with the academic year of students undergoing such training, but, for what appeared to be domestic reasons within the army, the first term of that year was considerably disrupted. This would not have been so bad if students had felt that the time in training camps was well spent, but there was general agreement that waste of time and effort abounded. Student representations appeared to achieve little, and then in December, 1953, one of the nation's leading newspapers expressed complete satisfaction with the training system and praised the government accordingly.

The A.S.C.M. reacted swiftly, since its National Conference met in January, 1954, some two weeks after this report. With the support of the General Committee, a resolution, condemning anomalies and inefficiency in the scheme and calling for remedial measures, was brought to the business convention, and received enthusiastic support. Copies were dispatched to the Prime Minister, the relevant Cabinet Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, the Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the National Union of Australian University Students. Again the reaction was a swift one, and the A.S.C.M. came under fire from the newspaper in one state capital and from a national denominational weekly. Much of this criticism was ill-informed, however, and the gratifying thing was the response of the Minister mainly concerned. His reply acknowledged a number of the complaints referred to in the resolution and outlined measures the army was implementing to reduce time-wastage. Such measures were put into effect and were followed by a scheme

which considerably reduced the disruption of the first term of the academic year. The A.S.C.M. had no illusions that its action alone was responsible for such reforms, but felt justified in its conviction that it had played a not inconsiderable part in occasioning them.

The same National Conference met at a time when a number of authorities were advocating (as they still are) the drastic reduction of Australia's wheat acreage. As one of the major wheat-producing countries of the world, Australia had been increasing its acreage for some time in response to the demand abroad. A lessening in this demand had brought with it a fall in prices, and Australian farmers were faced with the probability of considerable financial losses if they produced at the same high rate. While recognizing this, the A.S.C.M. was very conscious of the grain needs of India and Southeast Asia, and accordingly protested against any reduction in acreage and urged the government to ship surpluses to needy areas, either as gifts or at reduced prices. Australian farmers were to be protected from the revenue of general internal taxation.

Again the response was immediate, but the Prime Minister's reply made the A.S.C.M. more fully aware of the complexities of the situation. The Movement realized that not only had the incomes of Australian producers to be considered, but also those of producers in Southeast Asia, and that the whole economic life of the latter could be disrupted by well-intentioned but indiscriminate large-scale gift shipments of grain. So the matter came up for consideration at the 1955 National Conference. The result was the appointment of a special study commission of experts to investigate the whole position in the light of Australia's responsibility to Southeast Asia, and to prepare suggestions which the A.S.C.M. might support. Action based upon such information would, we feel sure, command attention from the proper authorities, and such attention the Movement is determined to obtain.

If Asia had been brought to our attention by the question of wheat acreages and the presence within our conferences of numbers of Asian students, its further needs and attitudes were also set before us by several Australian students who had returned either from visits to, or from periods of service under, graduate employment schemes in Indonesia and elsewhere. Such contacts had made them very conscious of the affront to Asians of Australia's immigration laws, unpopularly known as the White Australia Policy. So a resolution drawing the government's attention to the culpable features of this policy was brought before the same business convention in January, 1954. Again, however, because of technical difficulties, it was deemed advisable to collect more authori-





tative data upon which to base resolutions, which would command attention in the highest circles and respect everywhere.

Accordingly members of the Movement in the Federal Territory gave their attention to the problem, drawing, as they could, upon the resources of the National University. While remaining aware of a number of difficulties connected with it, the consensus of opinion favoured a quota system, similar in its intention to that of the United States. However, before this report could be presented to the Movement's National Conference, the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches declared its support for a similar quota scheme. So in January, 1955, the A.S.C.M. gave the move of the Australian Council its full support and urged the authorities to act accordingly. To date, though, nothing has happened in this connection, for Australian public opinion is either apathetic or antipathetic to such a scheme. As a result the two political parties regard the matter as of little immediate consequence, and a vast educational job remains to be done in this respect. The task of the A.S.C.M. must continue to be an urgent and inescapable fertilizing one — urgent because of our awareness of the problem and inescapable because of Christ's opening of the way of reconciliation for all men.

Such activity as we have outlined here is completely in line with the long-established policy of the A.S.C.M. As always, it has met with varying measures of success, but, immediately successful or not, it continues as part of the "normal" life of a Movement which would see every aspect of life redeemed and under the Lordship of Christ.



# "I DID NOT COME TO JUDGE THE WORLD..."

John 12: 47

*Extracts from a sermon given on the French radio by Pastor E. Lauriol*

What a disappointment for those who, in the world, are expecting a real judge ! Those who hunger and thirst for justice, and who for food find nothing but a stone and for drink the gall of injustice ! What a disappointment for those who are overcome by disillusionment, or those who see their good intentions misunderstood and misrepresented, with no possibility of reaffirming the truth.

Will justice never be rendered to these victims, these heroes, glorious but dead, or to these obscure martyrs, likewise dead ? Was not the coming of Christ, and is it not always, their expectation ?

Assuredly, and this expectation has not been unfulfilled, nor will it ever be. With this coming, something has surely been changed in the world. He who came is the One of whom the prophet said : "With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth", and who Himself said : "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied."

Take comfort. Because He has come iniquity will loose its hold, pain will loose its hold, the tomb will loose its hold. You who suffer, perhaps without respite, and perhaps without hope, you who are captives, tortured by illness, by events, by circumstances or by men, you who are foundering, as Christ did on Good Friday, with a cry as of one falling into the abyss — all you who suffer, take comfort. He has come forth from the abyss, into the light of Easter, holding death strangled in His grasp. Through Him justice will be done you. Your wounds will be glorious, your despair triumphant. Justice will be done you, a justice, moreover, which will yield a hundredfold, as did the good grain in the parable.

The Holy Scriptures declare that one day men will say : "Surely there is a reward for the righteous ; there is a God who judges on earth" ; certainly on that day when, as the ancient creed goes, "the Son of Man will come again to judge the quick and the dead".

\* \* \*

But He did not come for that. He did not come to judge and to condemn. He came to save.

God would surely not have had to send Christ to judge the world and to condemn it. As the saying goes, He would have had only to "let evil run its course", the evil to which men have delivered themselves, the evil which would seem to have taken upon itself the work of tormenting and destroying. God had only to refrain from interfering and, very quickly — as the newspapers say the day after an execution — "justice would have been done". But it is precisely this justice, the justice which kills, the justice of men, that God did not will. Through Christ God intervenes, not to judge but to save.

\* \* \*

We men demand that the guilty apologize. This is even a rather subtle means to avoid forgiving them. God requires only that we let Him save us. Too often, however, we try to make ourselves right with Him by offering Him the apology of our confessions of sins. But God has no use for them if they are not at least the expression of our desire to let ourselves be saved by Him.

Those who accept, says Christ, do not come to judgment. For God is not interested in proving to us that we were wrong, any more than He has ever been interested in lamenting or waxing indignant over the *fait accompli*.

\* \* \*

Our world shows many signs of being accursed. Nevertheless, it is not accursed, because Christ has come. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."



Whoever. Even the most wretched, the most despised and the most damned. God loves the most ordinary person with an extraordinary love. And for the most hopeless He always has hope.

Again, there is only one condition : that we believe in God rather than in our misery, our disgust with ourselves or our despair, that we not judge ourselves to be unforgivable, incapable of improvement and lost, when God has pardoned us and Christ has come, not to judge us but to save us.

Let us take seriously, first of all for ourselves, this decree of God concerning all men, a decree of victory and of life which God has proclaimed through Christ to our worst enemies : sin, pain and death. We have only to accept this joy, to surrender ourselves to Christ, to open to Him our souls, folded up and crumpled in sullen shame, in obstinate evasion — like those flowers, which, folded up and crumpled during the night, open fresh and smooth, new under the fingers of the sun.

\* \* \*

But this condition naturally implies a consequence. It is that we take seriously for others also this decree of God. If God, who knows the depths of our hearts, does not wish to judge like a judge, but to heal like a physician, by what right do we judge and condemn our brothers, we who know almost nothing of the truth of their inmost beings ? By what right should we wish them to be lost ? It is such a monstrous and absurd pretension that it shows us clearly that the depth of our sin is also a depth of stupidity.

Judge not, said Christ.

Alas, God finds us in the very act of judging others, more often than saving them. Judging blindfold, we are bound to be unjust. We simplify everything so that the judgment we make or the indifference we assume may entail no complications. And we should hold out a helping hand.

"There is nothing we can do about it", we say.

God did not say that, and He does not allow us to say it, either of ourselves, or of others. Christ Himself is this prohibition. God, who had the wisdom and power to judge, did not want the horrible satisfaction that comes from judging. How can we, who know nothing of the painful and marvellous secrets of men's souls, their struggles, their distress, their mistakes, which we always interpret as crimes — and often wrongly, their sufferings, their cries for help, their thirst to be loved — how can we dare assume, without hesitation, a right which God denies Himself.

This is not to say that there are not all around us guilt and guilty people, sometimes very guilty, creatures of perdition. What a marvellous discovery ! For whom is forgiveness if not for the guilty, for whom is salvation if not for the lost. And we are too apt to forget that in God's sight we were and are included among them.

We who are guilty, let us at least behave towards the other guilty ones as the Holy God behaves towards us. Let us close the accounts of our wrongs and our faults, our disappointments and our discouragements. Let us not condemn ourselves to the forced labour of bitterness, grief and remorse. Let us not shut ourselves up in this prison which Christ called "the outer darkness", when the Father opens to us the gates of His house.

Let us love this Father, in ourselves and in our brothers. For His sake let us measure our own worth and that of our brothers by the price which God paid for each one of us : the blood of Christ on Golgotha.

The more I trust my neighbours, my friends and all men, the more I shall sense with delight the trust which God had set in me — however incomprehensible that may seem to be.

The more I have to forgive, the more I shall know myself forgiven.

The more I give of joy, the more I shall have of this joy.

# THE FRENCH S.C.M. AND POLITICS

“Can the S.C.M. engage in politics?”

DANIEL GALLAND

The members of the Political Commission of the S.C.M. Congress held at Lyon in 1950 were well aware that when their proposed decision was accepted by the Congress as a whole, it marked a turning point in the history of the French S.C.M. To the question, “Can the S.C.M. engage in politics?”, it had always previously answered “No”. When in 1950 it reversed this stand and replied “Yes”, the decision involved important consequences which have determined the attitude of the S.C.M. towards politics during the last five years.

Do not misunderstand me : members of the French S.C.M. have not only always studied political problems, but have themselves participated in specific acts of protest directed to the public authorities or of solidarity with victims of injustice, but this was primarily a matter of individuals taking a stand, or of demonstrations instigated by groups which could be described roughly as having definite political leanings : an agreement would be arrived at on either





the local or national level among some students, more alive than others to a current issue, or else several S.C.M. members would find themselves together in a movement which had originated outside of the S.C.M. But rarely did the whole local group fall into step, and it was clearly understood, in any case, that the national S.C.M. was in no way committed by these initiatives, which were simply an expression of the freedom traditionally granted to the diverse associations grouped together in the S.C.M.

In 1950, on the contrary, it was admitted that the S.C.M. as such — under certain strict conditions, of course — could take a stand on political questions. The principle of “individual commitment within a collective a-political attitude” was rejected.

Since the S.C.M. has no separate existence apart from the students who make it up, why could it not take a position on specific political issues, provided it did so with the unanimous approval of its members? This golden rule of unanimity — or, in any case, of the absence of declared opposition — was one of the limitations established at Lyon to prevent the S.C.M. from taking on the appearance of a political party. As another precaution, it was also decided that a stand should be taken preferably only on questions which had to do with students or youth, or on the student or “youth” aspect of certain problems of a general political nature. This was to avoid the dissipation of effort and to preserve the student character of the S.C.M.

A great conviction had seized the members of this Congress — there is no denying it: that the French S.C.M., in the years to come, would doubtless have to play the role of political watchdog for the churches, and that this decision gave it the necessary means.

With this background, let us try to draw up a very brief and incomplete political balance sheet of these last five years. It goes without saying, first of all, that individual actions, or those emanating from small groups of S.C.M. members who come together with a common political conviction, continue as before. Take, for example, the “atomic furore”. At the time of the Stockholm Appeal and the invitation issued by the 17th International Conference of the Red Cross to unite in a demand for the absolute prohibition of atomic weapons, some student leaders called on their fellow students and their professors to promote a stand by the French university. At least five members of the French S.C.M. belonged to the national committee organized for this purpose. Others were opposed to signing the Stockholm Appeal. There followed an impassioned debate, which would prove, if this were necessary, that the S.C.M. is not yet ripe for political monolithism!

But how far have we gone along the road of collective *engagement*. Here we must distinguish between three levels:

1. *The local level.* Some groups manage, not without difficulty, however, to cooperate, as groups, in common action with other student organizations. The S.C.M. of Montpellier participated last spring in a demonstration of solidarity with overseas students, of which there are many in the city. One interesting fact: the S.C.M. was the only movement which was not there either because it was the student section of a political party or because it was composed of overseas students. A member of the S.C.M. read a statement which gave the reasons — Christian faith and love — which had led him and his fellows to join in the struggle with the coloured students against the

bad policy being followed by the French government in its overseas possessions. The decision to read this statement had not been unanimous, but, after much discussion, it appeared that no-one was unalterably opposed to such a gesture.

At the same period the Lyon S.C.M. took part in a liaison committee, one of whose purposes was to defend North African students residing in the city against the illegal acts and measures of intimidation of which they were the victims.

2. *The Executive Committee level.* This national governing body takes certain political decisions in the name of the S.C.M., for example, in the affair of the National School of Administration competition. Several days before the competition of 1953 five students were excluded for what were obviously political reasons. The Executive Committee joined with other organizations in protesting to the Ministers of Education and the Interior.

The French Committee of Youth Movements should also be mentioned here. This Committee unites, and is the representative to the public authorities of, primarily the Catholic and Protestant youth movements, including the S.C.M. It played a tremendous part in setting in motion and saving the valuable elements of the experiment begun by Mendes-France under the name "policy for youth".

3. *The level of national action.* The motions which every self-respecting national S.C.M. Congress passes for the benefit of the government and other public authorities seem more and more to express a common mind on political affairs. To cite a very recent example : a meeting of S.C.M. leaders at Bièvres in November drew up a statement on the situation in North Africa and on the problem of partial mobilization for the war in Algeria, which was unanimously accepted by the fifty-five participants<sup>1</sup>.

Two questions in conclusion :

1. Is the French S.C.M. in the process of taking on a political character ? It must be recognized that a certain "leftist" tendency has appeared — there are no longer any communist members, as in 1950, but, unless I am mistaken, neither are there any "Europeans" or any "conservatives". There are doubtless numerous reasons for this, among them a lack of political maturity among young students, and also the fact of the relaxation of tension in the world. The question of a decisive choice between East and West, which would certainly provoke a violent division of opinion within the S.C.M., is set aside in favour of urgent problems such as Algeria, the elections, and so on.

2. Has anything really been achieved along the line of this "political vocation" of the French S.C.M., somewhat arrogantly proclaimed in 1950 ? We must doubtless pull in our horns a little, and recognize that, like too many Christians past and present, we sin through lack of vigilance and of political judgment. Nevertheless, there is at least a genuine desire to profit by past experiences, for instance, to apply the lessons learned today in Algeria to the problems of Africa south of the Sahara. It has just been decided that the theme of the next national S.C.M. Congress will be "The African Facing Western Civilization".

<sup>1</sup> This is published in a special issue of the French S.C.M. magazine, *Le Semeur*, the title of which is in itself significant : "Must we say no to war ?"



# "THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME"

DONALD TYTLER

We have been feeling for some time in Birmingham, that all our thinking and discussing of the Christian faith and life in political situations was largely a waste of time, because our discussions were confined to Christian groups, and ignored the fact that the majority of our fellow students were not Christians. Yet they were deeply engaged in the political life of the world, the nation and university, whether they realized it or not — and some of them did.

As one of our major projects in Mission '54<sup>1</sup>, we arranged a meeting to advertise the Christian concern in political life, and *all* the political societies in the universities agreed to sponsor it and to encourage their members to attend. We called it simply, "The Challenge of Our Time", and the main speech was given by Canon H. M. Waddams, General Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, who had been a delegate to Evanston. It was the best attended meeting of the week.

We arranged to follow this meeting by holding five discussion groups, at which each political society in turn undertook to introduce a subject of its own choice. The Communist Society chose "Communism and Liberty", the Conservatives, "Politics and Personal Freedom". To be honest, the quality of the discussions was not very high, but certain things emerged, as a result of them, which interested us, and may interest others.

Before any of the organized meetings happened, a great deal of time had to be spent talking with the chairmen of the political societies. Having recovered from their surprise that we Christian students knew there was such a thing as politics, let alone were interested in it and concerned about it, they were all extremely helpful. Their motives varied, as might have been expected: the further we went to the left the more enthusiasm we found, since there was a good opportunity for their own propaganda. The further right we went, the more obvious was the appeal to everyone being decent chaps, so they'd come in.

In discussion, it was quite obvious that the picture of the Church in all the non-Christians' minds was that of the Conservative Party at prayer. (But at least the left-wingers came to the discussion! The Conservatives were mostly at the Wine and Food Club sherry-tasting!) We had the almost impossible task of showing that a good many Christians are not identified

<sup>1</sup> See *Federation News Sheet*, May-June, 1955, P. 87

with *laissez-faire* capitalism, and are not automatically opposed to all strike action.

Some of the familiar issues cropped up : pacifism or non-pacifism, capitalism or socialism ; but they came up in a new and vigorous way because this was not a holy huddle of Christians deploring this or that, but a very mixed group in which some profoundly believed that communism was the answer, others democratic socialism.

We discovered rapidly that any fool can talk *about communism* : it is a quite different matter to talk *with a communist*. I believe the same experience was felt by the non-Christians. They had not discussed Christianity as a reactionary idealism. They were surprised to find one or two Christians better informed about international politics than they were themselves.

What emerges from this ? First, we are only at the beginning. We spent much time getting our terms clear and in understanding what we were saying. We only began to appreciate what we were thinking and feeling as we talked.

Secondly, we Christians were so bad at expressing what we thought and felt, as Christians, that we were very poor interpreters of the Gospel. But we saw enough to know that a number of the people we were thinking and talking with had been forced to take a second look at the Church.

You can't call this evangelism — it isn't. It is only pre-evangelism. We have to demonstrate what we believe by the way we live, not individually, but corporately, as the Church in the world. These political society men are all ardent disciples of St. James — as far as they want to be. The Church to them is a reactionary pressure-group. This is partly because they don't know what is going on through the World Council of Churches and the Church in the way of work to relieve suffering. But they don't see the Church crying out for justice in society and doing something about it. No doubt this is because they want the Church to back the socialists, or the communists, or the conservatives. They find it hard to see that Christians can differ from one another in their allegiance to political parties.

For us, this series of meetings and discussions was the biggest challenge to the faith that we have had to face — primarily because we were meeting people, not talking about an "ism". We were glad we had done it, and we hope to keep going. We have no doubt about the importance of the S.C.M. manifestly concerning itself with politics, and with those who make politics their enthusiasm and their form of service, from whatever point of view they start.



# FEDERATION AROUND THE WORLD

## United States

Almost 700 American Baptist students from 43 of the United States met this fall at Green Lake, Wisconsin, to share in fellowship and study.

The students, led by outstanding Christians from all parts of the country, grappled with the theme "The Christian Student in the Life of the Church". In 35 small study groups, they discussed the nature of the Church, the philosophy and call of the church world mission, and the structure and operation of the local church.

Part of the basic purpose of the entire conference was to bring together in face-to-face confrontation students from different racial, economic and social backgrounds. Separated by thousands of miles of land, centuries of cultural heritage, and many theological differences, these American students seldom have an opportunity to meet and to know each other. Here at Green Lake, however, all temporal barriers were lowered, and every student attending the conference came to a new understanding of the words "one Lord, one faith, one birth, one God and Father of us all".

Highlights of the conference included the presentation of five students who sail this fall for mission fields in Burma. There several of them will do student work and the others will be in general missions.

It was a privilege, too, to have among attendants at the conference many overseas students. Their contributions to the discussion of the nature of the Church were invaluable.

The World's Student Christian Federation was a topic of conversation and programing throughout the entire conference. A new understanding of the relationship of the Baptist Student Movement to the W.S.C.F. was reached, and many individuals left Green Lake eager to carry this understanding into their local student groups. As a result of the W.S.C.F. presentations and discussions, and of the presence at the conference of Herluf Jensen, Executive Secretary of the United Student Christian Council, the Baptist Student Movement made a substantial increase in its pledges to both organizations.

Today, because of their experiences at Green Lake, American Baptist students in all parts of the United States are studying, discussing and praying for the Church and its work.

## South Africa

In the South African S.C.A. an effort is being made to consolidate and extend the work of the reorganized Bantu Section through the election of regional committees and the holding of regional conferences, both in areas like Transkei (including Fort Hare University College)

*Newly-elected  
officers of the  
Baptist Student  
Movement,  
U.S.A.*



where there is a long-standing tradition, and new areas like North Transvaal, where over 90 students and staff delegates attended the last conference.

The most recent conference was at the Umnini Bantu Camp in Natal, with 35 delegates from seven schools and the Non-European Medical School, which is part of Natal University. Rev. B. Mokoteli, the Travelling Secretary, gave a series of addresses, followed by discussion, on the theme, "Christian Leadership", and Margaret Nash, who attended the W.S.C.F. Executive Committee meeting this summer, led the Bible study and brought news of the Federation to the conference.

There was much discussion of the development of the Bantu Section work of the S.C.A. in the new situation in which schools come under government rather than missionary auspices. The S.C.A. has applied to the Native Affairs Department for official recognition. Plans were also made for wider contacts with church congregations on the occasion of the Universal Day of Prayer for Students. Although much help comes from the Afrikaans Section of the S.C.A., finances continue to be difficult, and a campaign to organize support from ex-members now working is projected.

Federation members interested in receiving the quarterly *Bantu Newsletter* are invited to write to Rev. J. H. Scheepers, P.O. Box 1004, Bloemfontein, South Africa. There is no subscription (but donations are always welcome!).

### Nigeria

Dear Philippe :

At last I am writing. I am not sure I have personally written to you or the Secretariat since we parted at Nasrapur in 1953. I am very glad to write now and to convey to you the greetings of

the S.C.M. of Nigeria. You will be glad to hear that I am now the General Secretary of the S.C.M.

From September 15 to 19 the S.C.M. in Western Nigeria held a conference and a general meeting. The theme of the conference was "The Living Church"<sup>1</sup>. There were about 130 delegates from about 30 of the 40 branches in the Region. We are grateful to God that it was the most enjoyable and useful conference ever held in this country.

We have been told that Valdo Galland will visit our Movement next year. We are anxiously waiting to welcome him with the proverbial lavish African hospitality. In Nigeria, 1956 is called "the year of destiny" for many hope for self-government then. For us of the S.C.M. of Nigeria also, 1956 is a great year, for then we shall have a Federation visitor. We hear also that the W.S.C.F. is willing to sponsor a West African conference on youth work early next year. Please let me have details of that and the visit of Valdo. We should, however, be pleased the more if Valdo's visit coincides with the conference, for we'll want to hear him there and in our branches.

Please give my warm greetings to Kyaw Than and Valdo. God bless you.

Yours, in Christ

'Bola Ige

<sup>1</sup> See *Federation News*, No. 1, 1956, for report of this conference.

'Bola Ige (centre) at the W.S.C.F. General Committee at Nasrapur, India





# INTERCESSIONS

1956

## *Latin American S.C.M.s :* January 1 - 7

Dominican Republic : Carlos A. Ruiz, Counsellor.

Guatemala : Robert C. Thorp, General Secretary.

Jamaica : John C. Stewart, General Secretary.

## *Great Britain :*

British S.C.M. Overseas Conference, for those intending to go to other countries as missionaries, business, or government people, in Sheffield, January 2-7, 1956. Theme : "Our Unity in Christ and the Disunity of Society".

British S.C.M. Industrial Students' Conference, Rugby, January 5-9 ; Industrial Secretary, Martin Cooper. Theme : "Industry Today—A Common Enterprise."

## *New Zealand :*

Second session of N.Z.S.C.M. General Committee, January 5, Wellington Province.

One-day conference for branch officers of N.Z.S.C.M.

*Norway :* Two winter camps for high school members.

## *Sweden :*

Leadership Training Course, January 2-5.

Annual Conference, January 5.

## *W.S.C.F. :*

Philippe Maury visits Latin America.

Please pray for the work done in the Geneva office and all members of the office staff.

## *Latin American S.C.M.s :* January 8 - 14

Mexico : Abraham Alfaro Diaz, General Secretary ; Rósenda Báez-Camargo, President ; José Niete Anduaga, Ernesto Roldán Vargas, Celia Garcia de Alarcon, Officers.

Peru : Wenceslao Bahamonde, Secretary for Christian Education ; Ivan J. Asencio Rachumi, Local Secretary ; Ivan H. Nothdurft, Adviser.

*Sweden :* S.C.M. conferences, January 3-15. Theme : "A New Working Program for the Church".

*Europe :* European Council and European High Schools Movement Consultation, Bièvres, France, January 9-16. Martien Witteveen, Chairman, European Council ; Frank Glendenning, Coordinator, Schools Movement.

## *Germany :*

E.S.G.i.D., Eastern Branch : Student meeting in Berlin on missionary questions, January 11-15.

Conference on journalism of the *Studentengemeinde* Eastern Branch, in Berlin, January 11-15.

## *W.S.C.F. :*

Parker Rossman joins the staff in Geneva to work on the General Committee.

## *Latin American S.C.M.s :* January 15 - 21

Puerto Rico : Ana Inés Braulio, Corresponding Secretary ; Domingo Velez, University Chaplain ; Thomas Romero Caldéron, President of Federation's Congress.

Venezuela : Robert E. Seel, Student Pastor.

*W.S.C.F. :* Federation Study Chalet, Castlereagh, Australia, January 14 - February 4. Theme : "The Christian Community". Leaders, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bailey.

### January 22 - 28

*Hungary* : Please pray for students and Christian students in Hungary.

*Germany* : E.S.G.i.D., Eastern Branch : conference for elected student leaders for the next semester, Bad Saarow, January 24-30.

### January 29 - February 4

*S.C.M. of Belgium* : Jacques Lombard, General Secretary ; Charles Keil, Chairman.

*Great Britain* : British S.C.M. International Committee, February 4-5 ; Secretary, Isabel Eden.

*New Zealand* :

Teachers' college branches begin their year's activities this week.

Please pray for the preparation of the university mission to be held in New Zealand universities and teachers' colleges in July, 1956. Leaders : Alan Brash, Martin Sullivan, Norman Gilkison, Eric Gowing, Joan Cochran.

### February 5 - 11

*China* : Please pray for students and Christian students in China.

*Swedish S.C.M.* :

### February 12 - 18

Committee of the United Student Christian Movements of Sweden : Gunnar Weman, Foreign Secretary.

S.C.M. of Sweden : Per-Olof Lundberg, General Secretary.

Free S.C.M. of Sweden : Olle Carlsson, General Secretary.

Please pray for the working together of the Free S.C.M. of Sweden and the S.C.M. of Sweden on a joint prayer book and preparations for a joint summer meeting.

*Sweden* : Leadership Training Conference, February 17-19.

### February 19 - 25

*Universal Day of Prayer for Students* : February 19.

*W.S.C.F.* :

Theological Students' Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, February 21 - March 6.

Theme : "Theology in the Service of Evangelism". Leaders : Dr. Keith Bridston, Dr. Rajah Manikam, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft.

Conference for theological educators, to be held simultaneously under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, the International Missionary Council, and the Board of Founders of the Nanking Theological Seminary.

Officers' Meeting, Ecumenical Institute, Château de Bossey, Switzerland, February 24-29. D. T. Niles, Chairman ; Marie-Jeanne Coleman, John Deschner, Cyrille Eltchaninoff, Vice-Chairmen ; Roger Blanchard, Philip Lee-Woolf, Treasurers ; Philippe Maury, General Secretary ; Kyaw Than, Associate General Secretary.

*Greek S.C.M.* :

### February 26 - March 3

Student Christian Association : Nicos Anneziris, General Secretary ; Nicos Liamis, George Sakellaropoulos, Nicos Mitsopoulos, Nick Nissiotis, Alice Coumpareli, Secretaries.

Student Christian Union : Demetrios Kotsakis, General Secretary ; Helen Nicolopoulou, Athanasios Phranopoulos, G. Karatzas, Despina Maniati, Secretaries.

*India* : Consultation of the University Commission of the S.C.M. to discuss crucial issues in relation to the life and future of the university in India.

*W.S.C.F.* : Ecumenical Consultation, Ecumenical Institute, Château de Bossey, Switzerland, March 1-5.